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DE RUEHKI #1787/01 3311207
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 271207Z NOV 06 REXMITD DUE TO NUMEROUS SVCS
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5213
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001787

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV MOPS KPKO ASEC CG

SUBJECT: RENEGADE TROOPS FORCE DRC MILITARY TO ABANDON
POSITIONS IN NORTH KIVU FIGHTING

REF: KINSHASA 1260

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¶1. (U) Summary. Weekend fighting in the eastern DRC between forces loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda and government troops have left at least four dead, 72 injured and an undetermined number of internal refugees. Sporadic clashes in the vicinity were reported November 27. UN peacekeeping forces have deployed in a show of force to discourage any potential advance toward the provincial capital of Goma. DSRSG Haile Menkarios arrived in Goma the morning of November 27 from Kinshasa to assess the situation.

End summary.

¶2. (U) Reports from MONUC and Congolese national army (FARDC) sources indicate fighting broke out in North Kivu during the early morning of November 25 when troops loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda attacked positions of the 11th Integrated Brigade (IB) just outside the town of Sake, some 15 miles to the northwest of Goma. Sake is located near territory controlled by Nkunda and has been the focus of several clashes between his forces and government troops in the past (reftel). The attacking forces were from the 81st and 83rd Brigades, which have repeatedly refused orders to integrate.

¶3. (SBU) The 11th IB attempted a counterattack November 26, but were beaten back and abandoned the town and some of their weapons. They established defensive positions in the area of Kasingazi, three miles east of Sake, in coordination with MONUC, and were later reinforced by elements of the 14th Integrated Brigade. MONUC elements have remained in Sake.

¶4. (U) The fighting followed an incident at a police roadblock on the evening of November 24 on the outskirts of Sake which resulted in the killing of a man related to the commander of the 81st Brigade's 813th Battalion. The victim, a Tutsi named Musafari Mayogi, was shot and killed by a police officer. Various reports claim Mayogi was armed, the victim of an attempted shakedown, a gunrunner for Nkunda, the son of a Tutsi chief or some combination of these.

¶5. (SBU) Elements of the FARDC 81st and 83rd Brigades controlled by Nkunda occupied the area around Sake. Indian peacekeepers of MONUC's North Kivu Brigade established patrols in the town. They fired warning shots from attack helicopters and returned fire when shot at on the ground.

¶6. (U) The area around Sake is densely populated, and some

of the civilian population has reportedly fled. UN officials and NGOs are reviewing the humanitarian situation. The UN has received reports of some 2000 refugees on the road from Sake, and OCHA officials met yesterday with partner organizations in Goma to discuss options for assisting them.

¶7. (SBU) Goma remains calm, although Governor Eugene Serufuli told the Ambassador by phone November 27 he had received reports of some fighting at some distance from Sake. MONUC confirmed reports of skirmishes between the 83rd Brigade and the FARDC 9th Integrated Brigade November 25-26 in the areas of Tongo and Nyanzale, further to the northwest of Goma.

¶8. (U) Army chief of Staff General Gabriel Amisi flew to Goma from Kinshasa November 26 for meetings with MONUC, Serufuli and military officials, and was reported to have inspected FARDC positions. DSRSG Haile Menkarios and Interior Minister Denis Kalume traveled with a delegation to Goma from Kinshasa November 27.

¶9. (U) Most of the casualties reported are government troops: three dead and 53 injured. Per MONUC, reported civilian casualties total one dead, 19 injured. No information has been reported regarding losses among the Nkunda forces.

¶10. (SBU) Comment. Troops on both sides in this fight are in fact officially members of the FARDC. The 81st and 83rd Brigades are units that have refused integration into the post-conflict Congolese armed forces. The 81st received orders last week to report to an integration center but clearly have no immediate intention of doing so. MONUC Force Commander General Babacar Gaye will brief CIAT members the afternoon of November 27. A draft CIAT communique is being prepared which calls on MONUC to take all necessary measures per its Chapter VII mandate to protect the civilian

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population of Goma, Sake and other localities facing armed violence. End comment.

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